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At the final plenary session of COP26 last November in Glasgow its president, Alok Sharma – tearfully as it appeared to some – concluded with what many have taken as an apology. “Collectively, we have acknowledged that a gulf remains between short term targets, and what is needed to meet the Paris temperature goal.... Today, we can say with credibility that we have kept 1.5 degrees within reach.... But, its pulse is weak.... And it will only survive if we keep our promises. If we translate commitments into rapid action.” This was surely a tacit admission that the world’s assembled politicians had failed, yet again, to cross a necessary response threshold in the face of looming climate catastrophe. George Monbiot (writing in the *Guardian* on 5th of January) recorded how, when recently discussing the same theme on air, he had broken down in tears. He now feels “deeply embarrassed.” And yet “I cry most days now”, he added.

The threshold we have to cross needs to be defined. In order to become a reality it is the point at which all sane humans understand, accept and are prepared to put into

Beyond tears

practice the actions required to avert terminal climate disaster. Whatever progress might have been claimed at Glasgow, the signs of continuing indifference are everywhere. The media have just reported the breaking of yet another weather record – the warmest ever Christmas day – in the same celebratory tone as they announce any new sporting achievement. Unseasonal and unprecedented wildfires have just raged in Colorado destroying 1000 homes, following tornadoes across the Midwest in December which caused a hundred odd deaths.

Energy policy in Europe is in turmoil as France and some eastern states promoting nuclear power options are accused of “greenwashing” by Germany and Austria. Internationally governments continue to subsidise the fossil fuel industries to a tune of £313bn each year. Unquestioningly and massively funded space tourism – not to mention the recently launched \$10 billion James Webb Telescope – is even touted as a step towards colonising Mars when, perhaps, Earth has become uninhabitable. Since Glasgow, the climate emergency has largely disappeared from

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...and much more

the headlines, currently dominated by streaming ratings, sporting calamities in Australia and gatherings in the Prime Minister's garden.

* * *

Given so many other immediate interests climate change can all too easily be moved down the 'pending' list. Meanwhile the window of opportunity to prevent irreversible collapse in everybody's ways of life continues to narrow. The prospects for any rapid follow-through from Glasgow are poor; Britain's responsibility continues until November and then the scene moves to an oil-focussed Middle East, when we hand over to Egypt which is hosting this year's COP, followed for COP28 in 2023 by the United Arab Emirates. The Presidential elections of 2024 could radically reverse the already faltering climate policies in the USA.

Is it time therefore to consider new strategies? There is one approach which has until now been largely discounted and ignored — to openly and deliberately exploit the fear factor. In their recent study* Oxford-based researchers, Ettinger, Walton, Painter and DiBlast review the "growing body of research [that] has explored whether evoking hope or fear about climate change is more effective in catalyzing attitude and behavior change among the public." Typically of academic approaches to this theme their conclusions are measured and the arguments finely balanced on both sides. They conclude that their "null results suggest that the impacts of a single hope or fear appeal can be overstated and caution against claims that either hopeful or fear-driven climate change communication strategies are necessarily optimal."

In truth we are in unknown territory here. The available evidence, as reviewed by Ettinger et al, is mainly based on 'laboratory' experiments under artificial conditions. We do not know and cannot guess how full exposure to the horrors — many already evident, with worse to come — of the effects of climate change would affect public attitudes in the real world. We are numbed by the many double standards that we seemingly accept in our media. Convention dictates that they protect us from access to the most lurid images of destruction and death. Yet we are routinely told of new wars and famines causing thousands of nameless deaths at the same time as — understandably — the media obsess about a single case of fatal child abuse. The continuing — and in normal times shocking — high numbers of reported Covid deaths in the UK tend increasingly to be taken for granted — until an identified individual case brings everything suddenly close to us.

As a society we struggle to agree on our priorities. At the very time that the Colston-4 have been judged innocent, a number of Insulate Britain protesters remain in jail, as the government legislates to make most customary forms of protest instantly liable to police bans. In the USA democracy itself is being called into question as the legacy of 6th January 2021 becomes gradually and painfully explored.

* * *

The trouble is that politicians are inherently unwilling to undertake policies as draconian as those that are now required to avert climate meltdown. Covid has taught us how far we are from adequate mechanisms for interna-

tional collaboration as a response to one all too obvious and acknowledged global disaster. It has also reminded us what governments are up against even in the best organised, most democratic and well educated countries; it is, for example, thought that nearly one third of the French population are entrenched vaccination-resistors. Society has changed and we can perhaps no longer rely on a collaborative collective response to dire circumstances as seems to have applied during World War Two. Governments are inevitably locked into an impossible position in seeking consensus on, and legitimacy for, drastic policy changes while also avoiding societal reactions that can get out of control.

The prospect of public resistance is all too evident. Energy prices are set to rise by more than 25% by April, adding to the predicted descent into poverty of two million more. Inflation is accelerating and average household bills are expected to increase by £1500 this year. There are clearly limits to the sacrifices that members of society can and will tolerate.

But the key question is an overarching ethical one; despite the unknowns and the risks, is it now the time to move to the 'nuclear option' among strategies on climate change? Should the public be finally confronted with the hard realities in all their horrific detail? The last resort must be total and brutal honesty.

B.B., T.J.H

* "Climate of hope or doom and gloom? Testing the climate change hope vs fear communications debate through online videos" *Climate Change* (2021) 164: 19.

Staff Experience and Wellbeing — is the message being heard?

BEN BOLLIG AND TIM HORDER

The University's 2021 Staff Experience Survey ran from 27 April to 19 May and was completed by 8,597 individuals, a response rate of 59%. Initial results and comments are available from the webpages of the Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) (<https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-experience-survey>) and each department of the University has been given access to its own results via an on-line reporting dashboard.

In many areas, the themes of the survey overlap with the four issues (pay, equality, workload and casualisation—see <https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/11818/Four-fights-dispute-FAQs>) behind the ongoing UCU industrial action, a national dispute currently being re-balloted at Oxford. This is the third strike in an unprecedentedly short space of time; but here and elsewhere Wellington Square has stayed mostly silent about something that might suggest real and new levels of discontent among staff.

The EDU webpage for the survey notes that Oxford compares “favourably to other H[igher] E[ducation] I[nstitution]s on a number of measures”. The Oxford survey, though, is bespoke so that most questions lack benchmarking comparators, and in general there is little standardisation in HE workforce surveys. Where comparison is possibly, some areas have seen a decline in agreement (i.e. favourable responses) to statements in the survey since the 2018 version, particularly in response to questions related to the themes “Being managed”, “Career development”, “Relationships”, and “Pay and benefits” (EDU Report, June 2021).

Overall, job satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the University as a place to work have both declined since 2018. Despite the changes in methodology that have made it difficult to compare the two most recent iterations, in many areas the results do not suggest improved working conditions here in 2021. SARS-COVID-19 must be taken as a mitigating factor, but as has been observed in many other aspects of life, the pandemic has functioned like an acid bath for the world of work, stripping away layers to reveal underlying patterns beneath.

As the EDU puts it, “The least positive responses to questions asked of all staff were: ‘I am actively encouraged to take up career development opportunities’ (42% agreed); ‘Management and decision-making processes are clear and transparent in my department’ (43%); ‘There is a fair and transparent way of allocating work in my department’ (44%); ‘Considering my duties and responsibilities, I feel my pay is fair’ (49%); ‘I can meet the requirements of my job without regularly working excessive hours’ (51%)”.

Academic and Research (Ac/Res) staff were less positive than Professional and Support (Prof/Support) staff across most themes, especially “Wellbeing and Workload”, “Pay and Benefits”, “Decision-making and Professional Development”. Female Ac/Res staff were less positive than

male colleagues across a majority of themes, especially “Leadership” and “Decision-making”. Male Prof/Support staff were less positive than female in several areas, especially “Pay and Benefits”, “Mentoring” and “Professional Development”; one might read this in relation to recent reports that women are under-represented in the “Recognition of Distinction” exercise, with a general tendency to undervalue their own efforts/overestimate the requirements for promotion. “Other gender” staff (1% of all respondents) and disabled staff (9%) were less positive in their responses in nearly all areas.

Ac/Res staff in the Medical Sciences Division were consistently more positive in their answers than in other divisions across all themes, including “Wellbeing and Workload”, though many scores were still relatively low. Humanities Ac/Res staff were less positive than other divisions across nearly all thematic areas. This might be surprising given the obvious pressures on lab-based subjects during the pandemic, but perhaps indicates the negative effect on job satisfaction of spending multiple terms teaching via the web or in the pseudo-human interaction of Teams meetings.

The survey gives further details sorted by staff type. Focussing on the 654 responses from Associate Professors (APs) (clinical and non-clinical), 91% reported themselves as happy to recommend the University as “great place to study”; 57% as a “great place to work”, the latter 15% lower than the headline result across the survey as a whole. This group is particularly illustrative as the issues that have motivated recent employee disquiet – in particular casualization – as in the UCU’s “Four Fights” (see above), should be less acute here. Yet the gap between their perception of the University as a place for students (highly positive) and their own experience of working in it (much less so) is stark.

Under the theme of “Leadership”, of the same subgroup (APs, clinical and non-clinical), 46% felt there had been a positive cultural change in their department in the last two years. Under “Wellbeing and Workload”, only 14% felt they could meet the requirements of their job without regularly working excessive hours; 20% that they could strike the right balance between work and home life. In the “Being managed” category, 23% felt that they regularly receive constructive feedback on their work. Joining the dots, we see a picture of overwork, under-recognition, and squeezed home-lives, that many readers will recognize – and this among one of the supposedly more privileged groups in the University.

Questions around recruitment, and how the University deals with harassment and bullying, receive much higher (i.e. better) scores, with percentages in the 90s. Meanwhile, 50% of APs agreed with the statement that, “My health and wellbeing are adequately supported at work”; 85% that “I have good relationships with my colleagues.”

But only 34% felt “supported to think about [their] professional development” and 30% “actively encouraged to take up career development opportunities”. 31% believe that “there is a fair and transparent way of allocating work in [their] department.” Pay is a particular issue for this staff group: 30% are “satisfied with the total benefits package”; and only 31% agree that, “considering [my] duties and responsibilities, [...] pay is fair.”

The survey also creates “word clouds” from open text responses. Again in the Associate Professor subset, the top two terms in the word cloud to the question “What is the main thing the University and/or your department could do to help you to progress your career?” are “time” and “research.” The word cloud for “the best thing about working” in one’s department includes “colleagues”, “students” and “research”; the same three terms also appeared top of “the best thing about the university.” In response to the question, “What single thing do we most need to improve?” in the department: “workload” and “staff”; on the list of things to improve the University: “university”, “pay”, “staff”, “workload”, and “research.”

The EDU report states:

“The results confirmed that our identified priorities were the right ones and that the most important areas to focus on for employee satisfaction were career development, inclusion, wellbeing and the sense of being valued. The area that was of greatest cause for concern was workload.”

The mention of inclusion seems to be an inference from the lower scores from minority staff groups, as well as dissatisfaction among female colleagues, but it is not immediately obvious as a concern across the survey as a whole.

There is further information on the response to the 2018 survey available at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/past-staff-experience-survey>. Planned work in 2021-22 in response to this latest iteration (see <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-experience-survey>) will include:

- A project to address issues of academic workload;
- A focus on leadership and management capability in the new People and Organisational Development structure, including work to celebrate positive leadership behaviours;
- Further work by the Wellbeing Programme Board to develop understanding of what contributes to staff wellbeing and satisfaction at Oxford and how that matches our provision;
- The introduction of Workplace Adjustments Plans as a first step towards ensuring more consistent and equitable treatment of disabled staff.

The People and Organisational Development unit (see <https://pod.admin.ox.ac.uk/more-about-us>) can be found at Littlegate House, on St Ebbe’s Street, and their responsibilities include “formulating and informing strategy regarding people development across the University”; “promoting best practice in leadership and management in people development”; and “promoting equality, diversity and inclusive management practice through our work.” Their staff are also responsible for the new Research Staff Hub (see <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/research-staff-hub>).

People Insight, who ran the survey, and whose client list includes the British Red Cross, the University of Man-

chester, and Jupiter Asset Management, pride themselves on their work’s contribution to workplace wellbeing (see <https://peopleinsight.co.uk/>). The work of the Wellbeing Programme Board – which promised a strategy to be implemented from September 2021 (see <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/article/wellbeing-resources>) – has not yet been very visible. It has included so far a free three-month fitness trial (see <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/article/staff-wellbeing-free-online-sport-for-staff>), but a search of the Staff Gateway and University website does not offer much evidence of this strategy in practice.

Workplace adjustments for disabled staff are clearly essential to the proper running of any institution. But workload seems to trump all these concerns for most respondents. Those with longer memories may feel a degree of scepticism about the proposed project: in some departments/units there have been multiple attempts over the last decade (and more) to apply workload modelling, with no meaningful results in terms of actual workloads, while admin and bureaucracy make once simple tasks ever more complicated. To address this requires answering difficult questions about the relationship between college and University responsibilities, and about the allocation of teaching and administration in departments.

The absence of pay as a matter of concern in these responses may also raise eyebrows. Most of us will have a short answer to the question posed in the third bullet point, above: less work, better pay.

In memoriam Anne Hudson

Unseasonably, the tree begins to bud.
For the first time since it was placed
she won’t be here to see it or to contemplate
the blossom it will lose too soon.

Inside are all her books, untouched
for the first time since they were bought.
The notes. The files.
The massed learning neatly stacked.

Scholar of a scholar.
Mistress of dense texts.
Consummate guide to the complex thought
of another Oxford.

Tomorrow, new eyes will see the flowers;
new hands will hold the books.
And others will benefit
from what you planted.

WILLIAM WHYTE

William Whyte is fellow and tutor in History at St John’s. He and his family were Anne Hudson’s next-door neighbours for a decade.

Precarious Academic Work in Oxford

TOM WHITE

Casualisation is rife within higher education: around half of “teaching-only” staff and 68% of researchers are employed on fixed-term contracts, while many more have contracts which are dependent on funding. At the University of Oxford, over half of all staff in the grades represented by the University and College Union (grades 6 and above) are on fixed-term contracts.

There is nothing inevitable about the levels of casualisation in the higher education sector, nor has it come about by accident; it is the result of universities’ reliance on a particular business model. After adjusting for inflation, the sector has seen its total income rise by around 15% over the last six years, while casualisation continues to grow.

The following testimonies were collected in November 2021 from Oxford University UCU members. The Report ‘Precarious Academic Work in Oxford: Testimonies from Oxford Brookes and Oxford University UCU Members’ was jointly produced with the Oxford Brookes UCU branch. Read the full document via this link: <https://bit.ly/3HuZH9s>

Respondents highlighted several interrelated issues: lack of **career progression**; lack of **employment rights**; low and/or **unstable income** and its consequences; **mental health issues**; casualisation’s exacerbation of existing **equalities issues**; and, for migrant staff and students, concerns around visa requirements and **immigration status**. We also asked staff on permanent contracts to share their stories on how casualisation has impacted their careers and their departments. They described how the **loss of expertise** and **excessive turnover** increase their workloads and are **detrimental to the development of a strong research culture**.

“Each time my contract is extended ‘there is no expectation that the work will continue’ beyond the end of its fixed term. This is demoralising, disrespectful, and dishonest after more than a decade of loyal and dedicated service to this University.”

“I was on fixed term contracts between 2015-2020. The longest was 2 years, but others were just 1 year and 6-month contracts. Because I had no guarantee of further employment, 6 months before the end of each contract I started looking for other jobs, which distracted me from my actual work”

“It’s clear that there’s very little interest from institutions in nurturing and offering a clear path of development for precarious staff. So I’m leaving academia in the new year...I don’t want to leave, not really, but it’s a still relief to have done so”

“Since coming to Oxford in 2018 I have been employed on 3 fixed-term contracts, the longest being 18 months. I haven’t changed job or roles, but still have not been afforded the security of a longer-term contract. The impact of this is multifaceted, and has consequences not only for my personal life, but also how I plan my career and the science I am able to do...Short fixed-term contracts are bad for science, and bad for scientists.”

“I am a...PhD student...and I am paid to teach undergraduates by my college...via a ‘development scholarship’, which means

that I am legally not employed by the college.... I do not have basic workers’ rights such as paid holiday or holiday pay, sick pay, ability to have a workplace pension I also have no protection if the college decides to stop my ‘scholarship’ for any reason...”

“Casualised academic contracts have left me massively in debt at times, and at times living below the breadline. Job insecurity has left me unable to decide for myself whether or not to start a family - the decision has been taken for me as I don’t have the money or security”

“I have been on short-term contracts for the last eight years. These have often been 1-year extensions on existing contracts. I have four children, and it is fair to say that job insecurity is something that occupies my family’s collective consciousness. The feeling of being ultimately dispensable...is affecting my mental health. In my current workplace, there are very visible (and actually quite arbitrary) boundaries between me and my colleagues with secure contracts... Sadly only a very small number of colleagues express their solidarity. I have recently decided to be more open about this with my students, and it has been nice to see that many of them do sympathise.”

“I feel undervalued and demotivated; only the enthusiasm of my students (who are paying high fees, and would probably be horrified to know the reality of the situation for many staff) keeps me going.”

“I am a recent PhD graduate with five different casual teaching contracts. Casualised contracts mean that I have had to move back in with my parents aged 30 because I cannot afford rent and have no means of securing a housing contract since my contracts are so short-term and much of my work is just word-of-mouth hourly paid. Although I make less than £15,000 a year, I have 12-20 contact hours per week in term time, have spent ~30 hours on admissions (which is listed as a necessary and therefore unpaid duty in my 2-hour a week stipendiary contract) alongside a (casualised!) 7 hour a week admin contract, so I am frequently exhausted and suffering from both mental burnout and (clinical) physical fatigue. I suffer from muscle weakness, insomnia, palpitations and migraines from the stress.”

“I am a European immigrant, and I am concerned that when I will have to apply for indefinite leave to remain, not having a job or a salary that meets the current requirements for a visa will force me to leave.”

“I moved from a faculty post into a college, and then back into a faculty. Meanwhile I taught for another faculty, for a decade. I wasn’t issued a contract for the sessional classes. When I fell pregnant, mid-job move, the sessional classes would have shown continuity of employment by the university. But because they never issued me with a contract, they didn’t, and my maternity pay was withheld. The federalised structure [of Oxford University] meant my career didn’t count.”

Oxford UCU is currently balloting its members for industrial action over Pay, Equality, Excessive Workloads and Casualisation, and against Pension Cuts. Read more about the disputes here: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/hedisputes>. To contact the branch, email ucu@ox.ac.uk.

Beware New Turns of the Screw

PETER OPPENHEIMER

Towards the end of last (Michaelmas) term – at the beginning of Eighth Week, in fact – the Wellington Square politburo served notice on the academic community to expect a fresh bout of central administrative controls in 2022. Not of course in so many words. One has to understand the murky fashion in which such prospects are signalled. In line – which is to say, “on line” – with present-day technology, they typically appear under the “Staff Gateway” heading. This is the platform where Wellington Square tends to communicate uniformly with employees of the University, whether they supply valuable “Professional Services” or are engaged merely in teaching and research.

To underline the point, the latter two functions are implicitly appropriated by the bureaucrats. The one-page notification – from the Public Affairs Directorate and under the name of the Registrar, Gill Aitken – is entitled “Supporting *our* academic mission” [italics added]. Not “the” academic mission. Ours. And the other key word is “support” and “Supporting”. No outright talk of directives, imposition of procedures or anything like that. Good heavens, no. But wait just a moment.

The Registrar begins with a paean of praise for “the dedication, commitment and resilience of Oxford’s professional services staff” during the pandemic. Not a very persuasive generalisation: the working lives of the near-2,000 central administrators have been, relatively speaking, less affected by the pandemic as compared with support staff working in departments and colleges, as well as academics. Coincidentally, I happened in the very same Eighth Week of Michaelmas Term (“Precautionary Self-Aggrandizement”, *Oxford Magazine* No. 438) to point out that the Covid paraphernalia of Silver and Bronze groups meant no significant change of procedure; rather, the ease of their introduction testified to the authoritarian nature of the University’s governance as developed over the previous twenty years. More on this below.

The Registrar continued: “So today I am sharing plans developed by senior leaders in UAS and the academic divisions to build on the collective spirit we have fostered during the pandemic..... We will shortly be consulting on a Professional Services Strategy, which will both showcase recent improvements in our services and help us to improve and develop them for the future.” The term “consulting” is to be taken, evidently, with a pinch of salt. “This is a strategy for all our professional services, wherever they are. *It is absolutely not about centralisation*, but about responsiveness to local needs and valuing local services, while joining up more where that makes sense – for example, ensuring effective planning between academic divisions and the UAS, enabling staff mobility to support career development, and developing leaders of the future.” Italics added, for laughter.

The Registrar’s words transparently reflect a false analogy between her two *almae matres*: the University, and the civil service – where her notions are doubtless applicable. This diagnosis is also consistent with the fact that the PSS plainly supercedes – though without mention, because

scarcely anybody remembers it – the short-lived Focus Programme, whose less pretentious-sounding aim was to “simplify the University’s support services.” The Programme had stemmed from a passing remark in the Vice-Chancellor’s Oration of October 2017. Its brief existence saw, as far as we know, Wellington Square accomplish – guess what? – a “move from a paper-based to an automated process for claiming expenses”, thereby speeding up reimbursements and possibly even reducing total costs by some trivial five- or six-figure sum. For details, see Ewan McKendrick [the previous Registrar] and Anne Trefethen, “In Focus: simplifying the University’s support services”, *Oxford Magazine* No. 397, Fifth Week, Trinity Term 2018. Six months later Gill Aitken herself co-authored with Anne Trefethen the programme’s evident swan song, entitled “The Focus Programme”, in *Oxford Magazine* No. 401, Fifth Week, Michaelmas Term 2018.

It is important to understand why there is no organisational kinship between the central administration in Wellington Square and support personnel in Departments/Faculties or Colleges. In the latter domains, appointments are made (a) to meet precisely identified needs of the academic unit in question, and (b) *subject to an overall budget constraint for that same unit, determined by external factors*. In startling contrast, under to-day’s constitutional machinery (dating from the North reforms in 1999), the central administration is in practice subject to no external budgetary constraints whatever, short of bankrupting the University. If it determines to boost its own staff numbers and their salaries, it goes ahead and does so, having the matter rubber-stamped by the University Council (which it effectively controls) and pre-empting the necessary funds from University revenue. Hence the more-than-trebling of central administrative personnel over this period.

In principle a sufficient number of academic personnel could halt the process by activating the sovereign assembly of Congregation. In reality organisation of any such initiative is effectively barred by the unsatisfactory state of relations between the ruling apparatus and the academic community. By failing to provide full and timely information about policy Wellington Square routinely incapacitates effective Congregation involvement. And individual academics have reason to suspect that opposition to the central authorities will sooner or later bring unfavourable consequences upon themselves personally. Even if bankruptcy were staring the University in the face, Wellington Square could be relied upon to close down academic departments (most colleges being fortunately still beyond its reach) before sacking a single central bureaucrat: “Overheads, dear fellow, overheads – closures have to be managed!”

A plausible spur to the Registrar’s initiative is the departure in twelve months’ time of the Vice-Chancellor. Or rather, the arrival at that time of whoever or whatever is to succeed the present V-C. To-day’s constitutional machinery gives the Vice-Chancellor power first and foremost to appoint their immediate entourage of senior officials and

to define (within limits) the latter's spheres of authority. As I observed in "Precautionary Self-Aggrandizement" (*loc. cit.*), no less than three of the current Pro-Vice-Chancellors with Portfolio have thought it prudent to get themselves re-appointed, ahead of time, for either five or six years. The Registrar, on the other hand, is content to initiate a Professional Services Strategy promising to extend further

the tentacles of Wellington Square into far-flung areas of the University. All in all, one can only hope that prospective occupants of the Vice-Chancellor's seat may actually steer Oxford back towards acknowledging and fulfilling its disproportionate share of responsibility for Britain's academic standards.

The hook

For Alessandro

Still sea, stilled in the morning heat,
Limpid sky with nimbus building up
Somewhere between the cardinal directions
And the water, clean as a lens.

I walked slowly through the receding tide
Ahead of you, since we stopped walking
Together a long time ago. Long enough
That now my mind rejoices in the moment.

There it was—the fish with bluish fins
Trapped by a hook and forgotten there
Together with the hook, dying in pain
While the horseshoe crab walked by.

By the time you caught up with me
I saw it was still moving and I saw
The hook in its mouth. The summer
Of separation must have been like my hand

Pulling the hook very gently out
Of the mouth of the fish, you,
Barely convinced to keep it still, so that
I could work out that last twist of wire:

Its mouth open and trusting, its eyes wide,
Understanding my touch and the shape of hook.
I was distanced, focused only on
Seeing the fish back in the deeper water.

You were stunned holding its body
In our daughter's t-shirt, unknowing,
Unknowable, even as I coaxed it and it
Swam alive, and free, disappearing while

I looked up at the faces of the children,
Trying to explain how it started a second life;
The fish nowhere to be seen, and you:
Left with the hook and the line in your hands.

CARMEN BUGAN

Carmen Bugan's new and selected poems, *Lilies from America*, was published in 2019. She is also the author of three other collections of poems, a critical study on Heaney and East Europeans, and the memoir *Burying the Typewriter: Childhood Under the Eye of the Secret Police*. Her book of essays on politics and poetics, *Poetry and the Language of Oppression*, is published by Oxford University Press. Her new book of poems, *Time Being*, will be published in March 2022. She lives in Long Island, NY, and teaches at the Gotham Writers' Workshop in Manhattan.

Anthropocaust

Cassandra never smiled. Devastation,
though future for others, was her constant
reality. En route to the death camps
people were still together, had luggage,
and could try to look forward. Even after
being stripped and selected, there may
have been distractions, conversation;
but oven fodder did not smile.

Our delusions are the disgraceful
mystery of these times: wars, festivals,
work, murders, pets, vaccines, shopping,
charities, music, and so unbelievably on.
Meanwhile the human vehicle is colliding
with signposts, shedding fenders against walls;
its tyres are fiery Catherine wheels. But we,
the passengers, turn inwards to shut out
the calamity we have long invited
and do not intend to overcome.

The climate campaigners offer comfort
to some who despair, suggesting they turn
away for respite with the fantasies of life.
It comes naturally from those who must
self-deceive about the power of governments.
But no wonder that so many others
are still preparing for fulfilment,
falling in love, making homes,
and sharing their enthusiasms
for every variety of sport.

RIP BULKELEY

Rip Bulkeley is an Academic Visitor at Exeter College. He recently edited *Rebel Talk*, an anthology of poems from the climate emergency which is published by Extinction Rebellion Oxford.

Another legal fiasco?

DAVID PALFREYMAN

The leadership of the University has serious issues of competency as evidenced by the decade long fiasco of the EJRA that has probably cost something like £1m in legal fees and which, one hopes, the current review will at last dump as failed policy. And now we potentially have the beginnings of yet another prolonged legal fiasco as the University foists upon itself the insertion of an EDI criterion alongside the traditional research and teaching criteria for academic appointments. As with the EJRA we could be led into a legal minefield – and after the EJRA experience with every reason to think that the University leadership has little likelihood of being able safely to navigate us through the minefield.

The idea seems to be that, in some vague and as yet inadequately specified way, the candidates' EDI scores will be totted up to count along with their Research achievement/potential and their Teaching competence: 'By embedding [EDI] selection criteria... we provide the opportunity for applicants to demonstrate their commitment to EDI and/or their experience of leadership in this area to the selection panel'.

Happily, I am not an academic and hence have no experience to invoke but I guess it is hard enough for candidates to demonstrate their R prowess and their T commitment without also now having to virtue-signal their EDI credentials; and that, in terms of being on a selection panel, I would assume it is enough of a task to accurately assess R&T without having also to factor in EDI. Does the candidate have to achieve a minimum EDI score after which R&T determine the result? Would a feeble EDI score eliminate even the best R&T applicants? Would a superb EDI ranking trump a modest barely-appointable R or T score?

Example 'interview questions' are to be provided to selection panels: such as 'Provide an example of a time when you identified a diversity-related issue in your organisation/institution and outline how you addressed it'. And in terms of the panel then 'assessing responses' it seemingly will find 'positive indicators' if the applicant 'provides clear examples where they have challenged or reported inappropriate attitudes, language and behaviour'.

What if at interview on being invited into the EDI territory a candidate simply declares that, while they trust they would never discriminate against a colleague or student, they will have no truck with trying to impress the panel with their supposed wakefulness and ability to spot micro-aggressions or whatever? The truly grumpy and utterly unwoke candidate might even have the nerve to admit to reading the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Spectator*, to voting Brexit and for Boris.

Having presumably been instantly eliminated from the running and despite perhaps a perfectly credible R record in Astrology or whatever, and despite perhaps performing well on the Teaching test, such a disgruntled candidate might well then assert discrimination on grounds of political beliefs* (flushing out disclosure of all the interview notes/records) and hence cost the University yet more

legal fees in trying to defend its selection procedures in front of an Employment Tribunal.

And he/she (unlikely to be a 'they'?!) might also make a complaint to the new Freedom of Speech Tsar on the OfS Board ** (assuming the relevant Bill gets enacted), again costing the University legal fees in defending its recruitment policy as not contravening the OfS Regulatory Framework that will incorporate the freedom of speech and academic freedom aspects of the impending legislation.

The University (and the Colleges) went far too meekly and unintelligently along with the Administration's half-baked EJRA proposals a decade back – let's hope this time ill-considered proposals to incorporate an EDI factor into the academic appointment process get sent (at least by College GBs) wither they belong.

* The egregiously fuzzy and complex territory is alleged discrimination on the basis of 'philosophical belief' under the Equality Act 2010 and how – if at all – there might be some overlap with the academic freedom and free speech aspects of working in academe, the former as protected in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and the latter as proposed to be better protected by the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill discussed below.

** Before the members of any College GB properly performing their duty as charity trustees could possibly sign up to participating in the proposed use of an EDI criterion in the joint-appointments process they should satisfy themselves as to the potential impact of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill (167, 2021/22) which currently states that:

Section A1 (9) - The University GB has a new duty to ensure that, 'where a person applies to become a member of academic staff of the [University], the person is not adversely affected in relation to the application because they have exercised their freedom within the law and within their field of expertise to do the things referred to in subsection (6)(a) and (b)'. With those 'things' being - 'to question and test received wisdom' and 'to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions'.

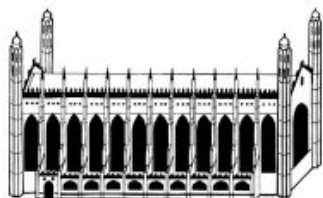
And s4 introduces a new example of a rare breed, a statutory tort - 'A person may bring civil proceedings against [any OfS registered university - or any 'constituent institution' of such a university] in respect of a breach by a governing body [of the new A1 duties]'.

While s6 obliges the OfS to enforce compliance as part of its 'ongoing registration conditions' for universities; and Schedule 6A of HERA17 is amended to introduce a new 'Free Speech Complaints Scheme' to be operated by the OfS and covering any 'eligible person' making a complaint, with 'eligible' including 'a person who has applied to become a member of academic staff of the [university - or indeed one of its Colleges?]' and who claims to have suffered 'adverse consequences'.

In s9 we get the appointment of a new Tsar to the OfS Board, the 'Director for Freedom of Speech', who will be responsible 'for overseeing the performance of the OfS's free speech functions' as imposed by the proposed legislation and also for operating the 'free speech complaints scheme'.

David Palfreyman is a Member of the OfS Board but here writes in a purely personal capacity and in no way represents OfS views. With Dennis Farrington he is the co-author of 'The Law of Higher Education' (third edition 2021, Oxford University Press) – that text has Update Notes at the OxCHEPS website, one of which

already addresses the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill and which doubtless will need to be frequently expanded if the Bill is enacted and then used by 'eligible persons' making complaints and/or by any aggrieved individuals attempting to make use of the new statutory tort.



Notes from Cambridge

Does Cambridge have a Strategic Plan?

Cambridge's 'Recovery Programme', announced in July 2020, would appear to have filled the space of the *Strategic Plan* Cambridge has failed to renew during the last two decades. If this is what has really happened it is important for two main reasons.

First, the Programme was given its title by the Council at a point in the Covid-19 crisis when it may have seemed both politically and pragmatically appropriate to point the University towards a period when the suspension of its governance was to be reversed and damage done put right. Events have made this description a poor fit. Covid-19 cannot yet be considered to be over. And the 'Emergency Management Plan'¹ under which Gold and Bronze groups and Taskforces have been running the University since early 2020 is still in force, although it has never been put to the Regent House for approval. It provides at (6.2) that 'depending upon the severity of the impact of the emergency, this may require a return to a 'new normality', rather than what was normal before the incident'.

Secondly, the 'Recovery Plan' which is now unfolding as an extensive (and expensive) course of strategic action for the University has never been put to the Regent House for approval. Yet it has much of the character of a Strategic Plan as Oxford understands it – and as HEFCE used to require of Cambridge too. As in Oxford, the constitution clearly requires such a Plan to gain the consent of the University's sovereign body. (Oxford's current Strategic Plan was presented as a continuing requirement despite the fact that the Office for Students does not actually mandate).

The new 'Recovery Programme' was the creation of a body called the Crimson Recovery Taskforce with a 'final version' approved by the Council in June 2020. The Regent House was merely informed of this done deal towards the end of a miscellaneous *Notice* entitled *Matters relating to pay restraint and the University's post COVID 19 recovery plan*, in the belated but unapologetic catch-up *Reporter* of 21 April 2021, one of the few episodic issues it was allowed during the period of Cambridge's suspen-

sion of its governance during the earlier Covid-19 crisis. A link in the *Notice* merely took the reader with Raven (SSO) access to a set of slides.² Approaching a year after the Council had approved the Programme, an *Overview*³ was able to list only a short *Notice* in the *Reporter* of 24 March 2021, but promising that

'the project team led by Professor Andy Neely will keep all members of the community updated on, and where appropriate involved in, its development'.

* * *

Cambridge had a *Strategic Plan* in the 1990s, in compliance with HEFCE requirements. On 13 October 1999 the *Reporter* published a *Notice* headed *Review of the University's Mission* referring to a consultation. It noted that it:

'is increasingly the case that universities are expected to have statements of aims, objectives, and plans flowing from their varying missions, and they are seen to be lacking (and may indeed lose funding for teaching or for research) if up-to-date statements are not available.'

It explained that:

'The current extended statement of the Mission forms a preface to the University Strategic Plan, and was first drafted in 1992. The wording has been amended to a limited extent since then, but the Mission as such has not been reviewed.'

The University's Mission, which certainly still exists under the title of Mission and Core Values⁴ is not, then, its Strategic Plan, but would form an add-on to one, if one now existed. On 24 November 2000 the *Annual Report* of the Council for 1999-2000 repeated the recommendation of the Planning and Resources Committee 'that the University, through its constituent institutions, undertake a review of the University's Mission'. The 'mission and core values' as stated in the *Reporter* of 14 November 2001 remained the same in the *Reporter* of 23 July 2009, so it seems that this review came to nothing much. In any case the Mission statement has always confined itself to

the inherent *esse* and enduring purpose of the University. It does not set out a plan of action.

The lack of a Strategic Plan for Cambridge has not gone entirely unremarked. On 11 August 2004 the Reporter published the result of a Review of the Personnel Division, which listed among ‘Issues and Opportunities’ the:

‘lack of a University strategic plan in which to place HR Strategy - commented upon in the Robson Rhodes internal audit report of July 2003’.

Nevertheless, that reproof did not lead to the framing of the missing Strategic Plan. Various plan-of-action ‘strategies’ for parts of the University are mentioned in the *Reporter* from time to time but no overarching Strategic Plan has emerged since.

Instead, responsibility for strategic initiatives seems to have moved to Pro-Vice-Chancellors, certainly by 2014 (*Reporter*, October, 1), when the ‘general role’ of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors was ‘to take forward strategy and policy development’. The Regent House has not been asked whether it considers it acceptable that the portfolios of Pro-Vice-Chancellors should simply be reshuffled to move ‘strategy’ around from time to time. Yet that seems to be happening. Under the heading *Changes in the University’s senior leadership the Council’s Annual Report* (*Reporter*, December 15, 2021) says that in December 2020 the Council had ‘agreed that the portfolio of the role currently known as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Institutional and International Relations) be amended to lead on the development and implementation of strategy and policy relating to all staff’. Meanwhile ‘Professor David Cardwell, had been reappointed to the office of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy and Planning) for a second term of three years from 1 August 2021’.

* * *

The Council’s present *Annual Report*, due for Discussion on 25 January, is littered with mentions of miscellaneous ‘strategic priorities’, including five portrayed in coloured boxes as lying ‘within the Recovery Programme’. This supports the view that it is being treated as a Strategic Plan in all but name. The Audit Committee seems to have been somewhat remiss in keeping an eye on what is happening. In its own *Annual Report* (*Reporter*, 21 January, 2021), it took it as read that the ‘Recovery Plan’ was the University’s plan. It ‘welcomed’ the ‘fact that the University’s Recovery Plan includes three substantial, University-wide programmes’, listing ‘Reimagining Professional Services’ (Cambridge’s UAS), ‘Enhanced Procurement, Purchasing and Contract Managements’ and ‘Reshaping the Estate’. The Audit Committee promised to ‘consider how best to address’ these ‘challenges’, including ‘how to monitor and support the large-scale change programmes of the University’s Recovery Plan’.

What is the constitutional requirement in Cambridge for approving something called a ‘Recovery Plan’ or ‘Programme’ stuffed so full with what is clearly strategic planning? Statute A,IV,1 makes the Council ‘the principal executive and policy-making body of the University’. Statute A, II makes it plain that a chief function of the Regent House is legislative but that it is also in charge of ‘the management of affairs’ in the University. The important constitutional question is when ‘policy-making’ should be

deemed part of the Regent House’s own ‘management of affairs’ and not a power for the Council to exercise of its own motion.

The present *Council Report* adds that it delegated responsibility to the General Board for the Recovery Plan for which it would act ‘as a programme board’.⁵ The General Board’s own *Annual Report*, also for Discussion on 25 January, notes that it ‘provides strategic oversight for the Programme’ but it also ‘acts as the decision-making body’.

The General Board is ‘responsible for the academic and educational policy of the University’ in the sense that ‘it shall advise the University on questions relating to such policy’ (Statute A,V, 1), merely, that is, ‘advise’. The University for such purposes is unquestionably the Regent House (Statute A,III,8) and again that important constitutional question of accountability to the University’s governing body presents itself.

The Council’s present *Annual Report* argues that the Council has not failed to keep the University informed, though it does not try to claim that it asked for its approval:

‘a number of communications to the University as part of the PMO’s plan for ensuring that the collegiate Cambridge community was informed about, and able to engage with, the Recovery Programme’.

The *Reporter* does not seem to have been offered these communications to publish, merely a *Recovery Programme Overview* (*Reporter*, 21 April, 2021) put up for Discussion by the Council on 4 May, and a *Notice* which was published on 25 July 2021 in reply to remarks made in that Discussion. An *Overview* (not a format known to the University’s constitution) is not a *Report* to the University with Recommendations and an automatic Discussion to consider them.

The Council now explains that the ‘academic sponsor for the Programme’, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Business Relations) is:

‘supported by a small Programme Management Office (PMO). The PMO team provides project management support and guidance to those working on individual projects, as well as coordinating the Programme as a whole.’

These arrangements were approved outright by the Council.

The Council insists it has ‘continued to monitor the progress of the Programme closely via twice termly reports from the PMO’:

‘In July 2021, the PMO’s update to the Council included the Programme’s vision and objectives, a benefits realisation map and a risk register.’

It adds that the PMO also reports to the General Board twice each term, providing an update on the projects, including progress, budget, risks and mitigations, and outcomes and benefits. The PMO ‘has worked closely with the Project Sponsors and Operational Leads to maintain a collaborative way of working across the projects, managing communication, ensuring alignment and coordination across the University and providing consistent reporting to the Board’.

The General Board may publish a *Report to the University*. Why did it not do so sooner, to provide some of those

missing ‘communications’? In the General Board’s present (but retrospective) *Annual Report* we learn that:

‘Business cases for nine projects have been approved by the Planning and Resources Committee (PRC), and one project, Rebalancing the Industrial Portfolio, has now concluded. For more information on the Recovery Programme, see the Council’s Annual Report.’

The Council seems confident in its own Report that:

‘enterprise and business relations may not be of direct relevance to all academic members of the University’.

Nevertheless:

‘In May 2021, the Council discussed a draft vision for the future of enterprise and business relations at the University. The Council welcomed the vision, which was produced by the Strategic Partnerships Office and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Business Relations), in consultation with key stakeholders across the University.’

The Regent House, not expected to find this of relevance, was not a key stakeholder, then? Yet the Council:

‘will now use the vision to encourage colleagues across the collegiate University to identify opportunities to align ambitions, resources and action plans to help make the vision a reality’.

As the *Report* reminds its readers, the Recovery Plan ‘includes thirteen projects that seek to enhance the University’s performance and effectiveness in education, research and staff and community support until 2023 (and in some cases longer)’. That is both comprehensive and ambitious, and surely too important to be allowed to continue without a properly respectful *Report* to the University with appropriate Recommendations? It certainly sounds like a Strategic Plan to me.

* * *

By now the importance of giving the Regent House its proper say is becoming more and more apparent, as expensive long-term effort goes into this assumption that the University should see all what it is doing merely as a matter of ‘Recovery’? It is very expensive indeed:

‘Total Recovery Programme funding is currently estimated at no more than £28m. Of that, the Planning and Resources Committee (PRC) has approved the business cases for approximately £17m, with approximately £11m available for future business cases.’

This is to meet the ‘five objectives of the University’s Priorities Framework’ (‘Outstanding Educational Experience; Impactful and Insightful Research; Supporting our Staff and Community; Enduring Financial Sustainability; Achieving Efficiency and Effectiveness’ divided into thirteen). Of these ‘Rebalancing our industrial portfolio’ is ‘already completed’ but the *Overview* added ‘no summary available’ and what that has involved remains a mystery.

G.R.EVANS

¹<https://www.governanceandcompliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/audit-regulatory-compliance/emergency-planning/university-emergency-management-plan>.

²<https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/reporter/2019-20/weekly/6587/6587-RecoveryPlan.pdf>

³Recovery Programme Overview

⁴<https://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/how-the-university-and-colleges-work/the-universitys-mission-and-core-values>.

⁵The General Board received a vision and objectives for the Programme, as well as a benefits realisation map and a risk register, at its meeting in July 2021.

How did Lawrence get to Garsington Manor?

BERNARD RICHARDS

Garsington Manor is famous in the annals of literature, and one of its visitors was D.H. Lawrence. But how did he get there? It was owned by Philip Morrell and his wife Ottoline, and was Bloomsbury in the country. They moved there in May 1915. It was, and is, just under five miles south east of Carfax, Oxford, in the village on a hill. The Morrells hosted an impressive roll-call of luminaries, including Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, W.B. Yeats, L.P. Hartley, T.S. Eliot, E.M. Forster, Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Bridges, Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield, Robert Graves, the painter Mark Gertler, the painter Gilbert Spencer, the composer Philip Heseltine (better known by his pseudonym Peter Warlock), Lytton Strachey, Dora Carrington, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence. Thomas Hardy came once. Even the person Carrington called Djaggers (Diaghilev) came once, but, disappointingly, not bringing Picasso. There were lesser luminaries too, including the second-division personality Thomas Wade Earp, who is supposed to be the origin of the word 'twerp'. It became a refuge for conscientious objectors. It has to be said that many of the guests at Garsington Manor were not as grateful for the hospitality as they should have been, and were somewhat bitchy about their hostess, Lawrence included. The manor was, and is, a beautiful sixteenth-century house, remodelled in the seventeenth century. It is on a relatively modest scale, and not a monumental monster like Mentmore, or the nearby Waddesdon. It was all very nice, and Carrington records 'shining silver, the ormolu furniture, musk smells and brocades.' Ottoline replanned the garden in formal Italian style.

Lawrence's first visit was June 1915. I always assumed that Lawrence and his wife Frieda travelled by train to Oxford and then went somehow to Garsington down the Cowley Road, possibly in a motor taxi, possibly in a carriage provided by the Morrells. In which case they would have passed by my house on the road up to the village, at that time a farm and its outbuildings. This turns out, probably, not to have been the case. A letter of 26 November 1915 mentions Wheatley Station, which was 2½ miles to the north, so walkable, especially back then when people were more pedestrianly mobile than now. After all in August and September 1912 Lawrence and Frieda walked over the Alps from Icking in Bavaria to Sterzing in the South Tyrol. They were able to occupy the high moral ground as non car-owners. He writes: 'Just send us a postcard, if we shall come to Wheatley by the same train as before. It will be so jolly.' (26 November 1915) Lawrence was at Garsington from 29 November to 1 December. It's possible that the Morrells sent their carriage to collect the Lawrences from the station. We know they had one, since in her memoirs Ottoline describes returning to Garsington from the inn yard of *The Golden Cross* in Cornmarket, seeing on the white road up to the village

'the dead leaves blown across the lamps of the carriage looking like large golden butterflies.'



Where Ottoline Morrell parked her carriage: *The Golden Cross Hotel in Cornmarket.*

In a letter of 3 April 1929 Lawrence remembers her 'stepping out of an old four-wheeler in all your pearls, and a purple velvet frock.' In her memoirs Ottoline Morrell recalls driving in a dog cart and 'a low phaeton with a dickey behind.' Philip Morrell used to buy horses 'that were certainly not fully trained' and the journeys were hazardous, especially on the steep hill down from Garsington to Oxford:

Many were the perilous adventure [sic] on those drives; either a large untrained horse in the dog-cart would start kicking as were going down our steep hill – oh, the horror of the thud, thud of the hoofs against the front board – or another vicious animal, one of the pair in the phaeton, would try to run away, I holding on to the reins like grim death, its fellow standing, trembling and shaking by its side.

We do not know whether these modes of transport were used to ferry guests to the station – which would also involve the steep and dangerous Ladder Hill. Ottoline Morrell also records cycling from Wheatley station, wanting to sing with joy 'after all the noise and agitation of London.' In Ottoline Morrell's collection of 4,000 photographs there is one of her daughter Julian at Wheatley Station, with the Ladder Hill bridge in the background. This has not been identified before. Note the milk-churns in the background and the steam crane.

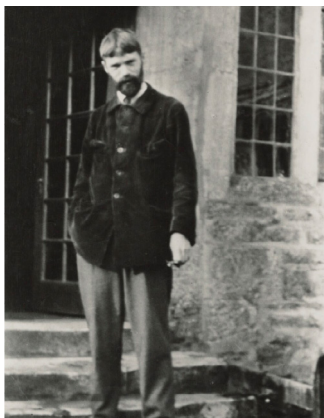


Lady Ottoline Morrell's daughter Julian at Wheatley Station. (Permission of the National Portrait Gallery)



Wheatley Station and the Ladder Hill Bridge. Looking towards Oxford. From more or less the same position as the photograph of Julian Morrell. But the lamp has been up-dated.

In *Siegfried's Journey* Siegfried Sassoon recalls arriving at Garsington Manor in a 'rattling taxi-cab' which seemed 'a vulgar intrusion'.



Lawrence at Garsington Manor, 29 November 1915. Ottoline Morrell's memoirs date this picture as 1916, but he was in Cornwall for most of 1916.



Ottoline Morrell at Garsington (1920). The man with the horrible shorts is Ralph Partridge, who married Dora Carrington. On the right is Michael Llewelyn Davies, one of the four brothers inspiring Peter Pan. (Permission of the National Portrait Gallery).

For Lawrence's first visit to Garsington he wrote to Ottoline: 'I don't know the trains to Oxford, but I will find out and let you know – we will arrive by an afternoon train in Oxford. I look forward to coming, and am very anxious to see you and Garsington.' (8 June 1915) The train from Oxford left the main line at Kennington, crossed the Thames and cut across country to Littlemore, Garsington Bridge, Horspath Halt and Wheatley, going on to Thame and Princes Risborough. The Garsington Bridge station was closed between March 1915 and 1928, and was renamed Morris Cowley to serve the motor works.



The GWR line from Oxford to Princes Risborough, crossing the Thames at Kennington.

It would have been possible to arrive at Wheatley station coming from the east, leaving London at Marylebone, but that would have involved changes. Another alternative was to leave from Paddington and travel through Gerrards Cross and High Wycombe. It was a Great Western Railway line, and was originally broad gauge. It was opened in 1864. A diary by a market gardener, *The Diary of Joseph Turrill of Garsington 1863-67* (edited by D. Dawson and S.R. Royal, 1993) describes the coming of the railway. 4 February reads: 'They are working night and day at the cutting and tunnel, they have large coal fires to work by.' The local vicar Mr. Elton recorded in his diary that the workers fortified themselves for the work: 'They fetched buckets of spirits on yokes from the King and Queen.' (9 October 1863). The line was converted to standard gauge in 1870. During the Second World War Dad's Army cut slits into the Horspath Halt station, so that it could serve as a defensive pill-box. A tunnel was built between Horspath and Wheatley, and was repaired in 1883. It is now a bat sanctuary.



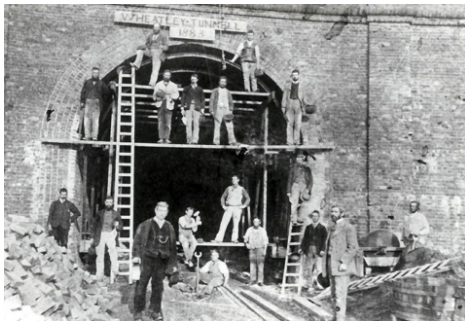
Wheatley Station in 1927, with St Mary's in the background. Just to the right is the jib of the steam-crane visible in the Ottoline Morrell photograph of her daughter Julian. The gas-lamp next to the signal is visible.



Wheatley Station circa 1900. Note the signal box. The locomotive is possibly a 'Metro Tank' 2-4-0, 455 Class, and this one retains its condenser tubes, suggesting it also ran on the underground. They were built from 1869 to 1899, and were designed by Joseph Armstrong.



Wheatley Station. The locomotive is a GWR 2-6-2 Suburban Tank, the 61xx series. The steam crane visible in the Ottoline Morrell photograph of Julian is on the right.



Workers repairing the Wheatley Tunnel in 1883. Presumably the gentleman with the watch-chain, holding a lamp, is a foreman.



Workmen on repairs to the Wheatley Tunnel (1883). The gentleman with the watch-chain in the centre is presumably the foreman. He is holding a lamp.



1963. Wheatley Station during the last year of its operation. The locomotive is a GWR 2-6-2 Suburban Tank, the 61xx series. The Ladder Hill bridge is just visible through the smoke.

Lawrence has left various beautiful descriptions of Garsington, but his visits there were not entirely happy. His hostess recalls him and Frieda fighting like cats and dogs: 'miserable time together, fighting and quarrelling all night. He came down on the morning of their last day looking whipped, forlorn and crestfallen, and she went off in a high temper to London.' In one famous episode she broke a plate over his head. Dora Carrington, who christened the manor 'Shandygaff Hall', was photographed in the nude clinging to a statue. She complained about 'swimming in that cesspit of slime'. She cycled there.

Lawrence planted some irises at Garsington, and constructed a rickety summer house. Don't suppose Bertie built anything like that. On one visit he took part in a production of *Othello*, playing the lead. I should love to have heard him doing the Moor with a North Midlands accent. I wonder if he blacked-up for the part? Sorry if that has lodged a disconcerting image in the mind. It's tantalising

that history usually gives out just at the point when one wants to know something interesting. Who played Iago? Who played Desdemona? Ultimately Lawrence fell out with Ottoline, partly because he portrayed her unsympathetically as Hermione Roddice in *Women in Love*. In her memoirs she writes: 'I read it and found myself going pale with horror, for nothing could have been more vile and obviously spiteful and contemptuous than the portrait of me that I found there.' Lawrence wrote: 'The Ott. is really too disgusting, with her threats of legal proceedings. She is really contemptible.' (1 April 1917) In 1918 Carrington recalls her rumbling 'on unceasingly between all conversations' about Lawrence, and Ottoline confides to her memoirs that he 'derides and distorts and caricatures me, making me publicly a pornographic image of his own mind.' Ottoline's husband Philip joined in the denunciation of Lawrence, who called him 'a sheep-faced fool' (Letter to Cynthia Asquith of 17 March 1918). When one looks at the photographs of Philip Morrell one can see that Lawrence had a point. Mind you Aldous Huxley is worse. He describes Mr Wimbush (in *Crome Yellow*, based on Philip Morrell) as possessing a face resembling 'a grey bowler hat'.



Philip Morrell and Nutty in 1917 (Permission of the National Portrait Gallery).

The line was closed in 1963, one of the victims of the Beeching plan, which got rid of scores of local railways deemed to be redundant and unprofitable. The last journeys were on the evening 6 January 1963. All the instruments agree it was a dark cold day; not only the instruments but my memory. There were two noteworthy-dressed passengers, one in deep mourning, the other dressed as Dr Beeching. They were William Owen Hassall (1912-1994,) the owner of Wheatley Manor House, and his wife, Averil. Their son Tom accompanied them dressed in a dinner jacket. *Land of Hope* and *Glory* was played on a wind-up gramophone. Hassall was a noted historian, a specialist in manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. He produced an enormous iconographical index, constructed largely by using volunteers known as 'Hassall's vassals'. Tom has had a distinguished career in archaeology and conservation.

These branch lines could be very informal. In her *Early Memoirs* Ottoline Morrell recorded that when she lived at Churn, next to the Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Railway (closed in 1962), before moving to Garsington, 'if we wanted it [the train] to stop we had to stand and wave a handkerchief.'

There are sad pictures of the track being dug up in 1969. It was very short-sighted not to keep the track, but to cover it with housing. The bridge on Ladder Hill was also torn down. However the line survives as far as what was the

Morris Cowley station, and is now the BMW Mini factory, and there is talk, which has been taking place for some years, of reopening it for passengers to Oxford.



Wheatley Station 1969: tearing up the track.

It's sad to look at the Ordnance Survey map No. 164 and see fragmentary cuttings and embankments, and 'discontinuously' written next to them.

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